

News Release

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BLM to gather wild horses west of Meeker Local adoption to follow

MEEKER, Colo.—The Bureau of Land Management White River Field Office plans to gather more than 500 wild horses west of Meeker in the coming weeks, selectively removing more than 300 and applying a state-of-the-art birth control pellet to many of those released back into the wild.

The actions are necessary to bring the wild horse herds to within approved population levels. The last wild horse gather in this area was in 2002.

“We are committed to ensuring wild horses are a part of the White River Field Office,” said Field Manager Kent Walter. “We need to ensure we have an appropriate population of wild horses in appropriate places to ensure a thriving natural ecological balance.”

The White River Field Office plans to gather more than 400 horses in the 190,000-acre Piceance-East Douglas Herd Management Area, which is southwest of Meeker. About 300 of those horses will be selectively removed to bring that herd to within approved levels. The remaining horses will be released back into the area.

The majority of the females released – up to 80 percent of the mares in the herd – will be treated with a 22-month, timed-release contraceptive pellet. This should help keep populations within approved levels and reduce the number of horses needed to be gathered and removed in the future. The effects of the drug are not permanent and do not alter the horses’ behavior.

The Field Office also plans to capture and remove all of the estimated 50 horses located outside of the Piceance-East Douglas Herd Management Area.

BLM also plans to remove about 90 horses from the West Douglas Herd Area south of Rangely, which will leave about 50 horses in the area. BLM announced plans last year to remove this entire herd. Until all protests on those plans are resolved, BLM will continue managing the West Douglas Herd at approved levels identified in the Field Office’s 1997 Resource Management Plan.



An adoption for the horses gathered will be held locally in late September at the Yellow Creek Corrals west of Meeker on County Road 20. For more information on this adoption, call the White River Field Office at (970) 878-3800 or log on to www.co.blm.gov/wrra.

Horses not adopted locally will be placed in the BLM's Wild Horse and Burro Adoption Program or long-term holding facilities.

Wild horses and burros on BLM rangelands are managed consistent with BLM's multiple use mission, which takes into consideration natural resources such as wildlife and vegetation and other users such as livestock and recreation. "Herd Management Areas" are areas where the management of horses and/or burros has been designated through BLM land-use planning. "Herd Areas" are areas containing wild horse and burro populations but are not designated for their management.

Since 1971, more than 213,000 wild horses and burros have been adopted through this program. More information about BLM's management of wild horses and burros is at <http://www.wildhorseandburro.blm.gov>.

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